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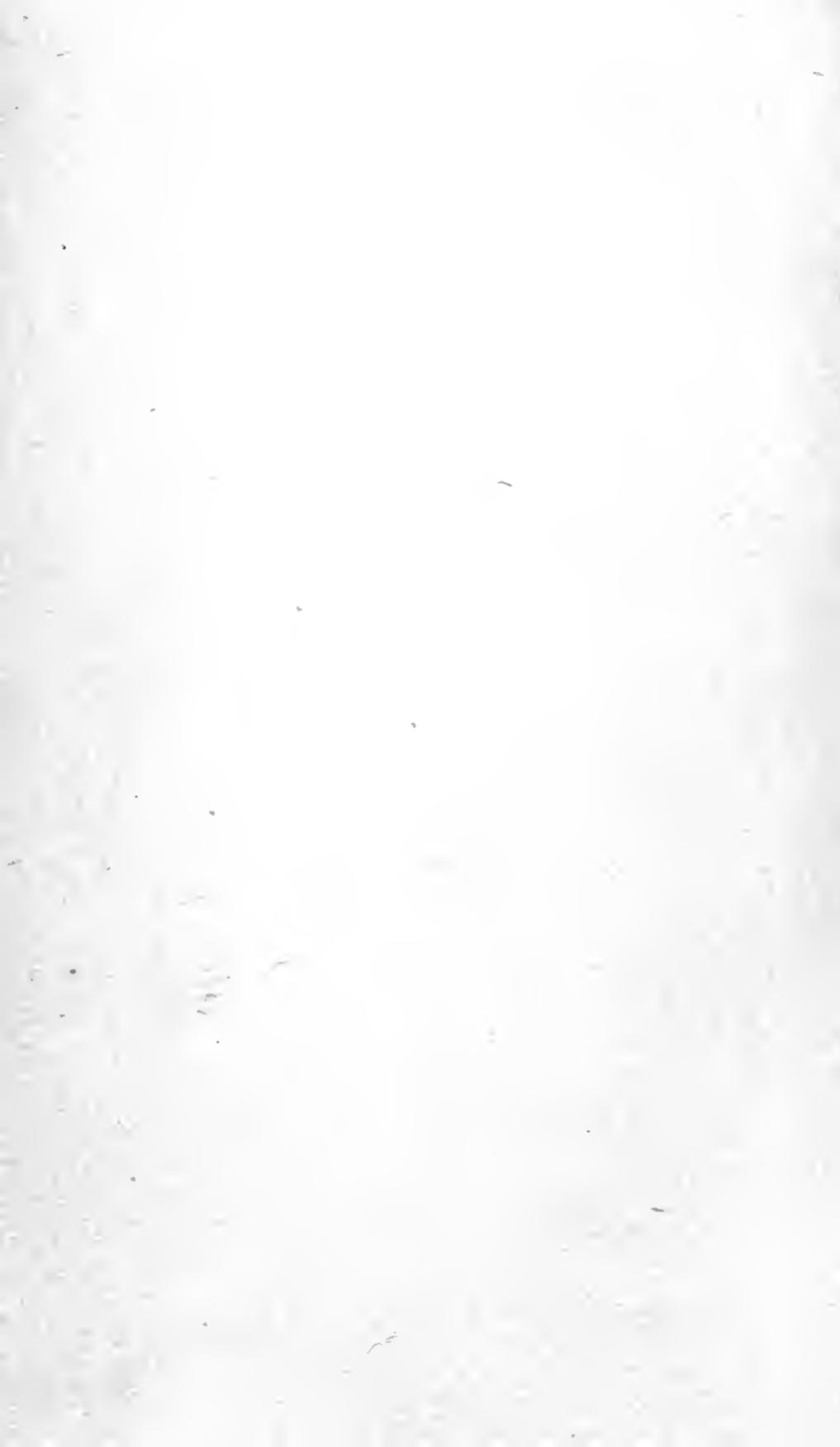
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# TITANS AND GODS



# TITANS AND GODS

*Frederick  
Victor*  
BY  
**F. V. BRANFORD**  
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LONDON  
**CHRISTOPHERS**  
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# TITANS



## PRELUDE

EARTH, Air, Ocean, came in desolate grace  
With natal gifts of elemental rune,  
Those three stark souls of saga, to commune,  
Each with his hollow breast and empty face,  
Beside the ancient cradle of my race,  
Each with a sorrow. In a broken tune  
Bars of that long lost epic I have hewn  
Out of a wandering heart on windy ways.

AUGUST 1914

*(After reading Descartes)*

WERE I but buried; in the soundless deep  
Of those eternal arches, that arraign  
The brindled fury of a universe  
Of thundered joy and surges of slow pain  
Before the changeless soul. There is no sleep,  
No waking, dream, nor any fitful curse  
In these cold courts. Beyond the brazen doors  
The tumult of ancestral chaos pours.

Standing amid his monuments aghast,  
Diminished man his meagre arm upthrows,  
Erect, and waiting on the crash of doom.

The air is black with banners. Round her tomb  
Mouldering to ancient dust, a soaring blast,  
England arisen, bared for the battle, blows.

## FLANDERS

TWO broken trees possess the plain,  
Two broken trees remain.

Miracles in steel and stone  
That might astound the sun are gone.  
Two broken trees remain.

## ARDGAY

A HUNDRED pontiff hills entomb  
Passionlessly, my purple home.  
Buried in a haunted cup  
Where the flashing snakes writhe up  
In coils of crested foam.

## SONNET

THERE is no atom of corporeal things  
Transcends its show. Though barbèd beauty  
sent

Through every porch beget a ravishment  
As of some bright æthereal hand that flings  
Eternal tunes across Time's trembling strings,  
Forbear, with scalpel of vain wit, to tent  
The world's dumb walls, wherein no song is pent,  
Nor prise the throat about the voice that sings.

Not hills endure. All bases are sea-sport.  
Scared to their height, the staggered Heavens  
count  
For each live lamp, that grimly burns to ice,  
A million stanch'd. Death blows his shunless  
mort  
Across the mystic waters as they mount  
To grip the narrow grave where Nature lies.

## THE AIR-WAY

THE Road ! The Road lies deep and wide and clear.

The Road whereon my spirit graven lies.

The Road is as my soul ; she is a fear,  
A living splendour and a wanderer's prize.

The Road ! The Road runs on from anywhere,  
And Nowhere is her passion, for her Rome  
Is Everywhere. So need my spirit fare,  
And in far faring find a hollow home.

O Road, were I indeed as great and free  
As thou, in all thy vast unconsciousness,  
Then were my soul indeed a road, and she,  
Taking the Universe in cold caress,  
For that she is no more herself than thee  
Should by thy measure therefore greater be.

*This sonnet is a variation of a poem on the Sea  
by the great Dutch poet William Kloos.*

## THE BATTLEFIELD

WHEN, from a platform planted in the sky,  
I have surveyed the fever and the toil  
Whereby men strove to steal a little ruth  
Out of the night, marked how the living soil  
Lies ever by dead waters, like a foil  
Forged by fools' fury, that the final truth  
Of finite things on earth might fitly lie  
Frailly in stone awhile, before men die ;

Then is my soul indeed a battlefield,  
Whereon the unstarred East hold tournament.  
Alas ! the West with all her wingèd lights  
Retreats before this darkness triple-sealed,  
Leaving a world of broken spears, and bent  
Blades in the traces of the Christian knights.

## THE MIDNIGHT PATROL

I STAND in the cathedral of God's brain,  
And through the window of His aerial eye,  
As a disdainful hermit from too high  
Ramparts of virtue, mark the inconstant stain  
Of delible ambition wax and wane  
Over the soil where men and maggots pry ;  
While wraiths of vanished æons surge, and sigh  
Forgotten valour and sagas of dead pain.

Down like unanchored stars through precipice  
Of stark night, plunge my sudden thoughts where  
your

Dear raven head in our wild Eden is  
Asleep in the arms of Lomond and Ben More.  
Lo ! All the ages crown themselves in this ;  
Each grain of sand the centre of a shore.

## THE SCOUT-FIGHTER

HE, the perfect pilot, knows  
The lift of every wind that blows  
Along the aerial street.  
He, high Heaven's arch-athlete,  
Trembles on the perilous keys  
Of Death's unmortal ecstacies,  
Weaving out of rushing fears  
The stable rhythm of the spheres.

## SPRING

SPLENDOURS pale as sorrow sleep  
In the silver eye of spring,  
O I am slain with the sheer sweet pain  
Of a beautiful broken wing  
And a voice too pure to sing.

## THE HAWK

HEAVY with the brackish wine at midnight I  
Pledge thee in thy polar enterprise  
Who art the keen edge of sobriety.  
Colder than crime art thou and arrow-wise  
And strong. Thou art the most perfidious beast  
that flies.

I too have drunk delight in weakling's tears,  
The rapture of quick cruelty, and the prize  
Of sudden prey. I too have handled fears,  
And filled the air with iron merchandize,  
Like a pitiless falcon nailed upon the skies.

Thou art the grinding intellect that whets  
The razor reason on the throat of love.  
Thou art the satyr of the soil that sets  
His image with the gods, and downward drove  
His body like a bullet on the homing dove.

Thou art the image of the Earth, grey bird,  
Thou desolate island moored in the unpoled  
skies ;  
The aerial absolute, the sullen surd  
And tragedy of cosmic enterprise.  
And lo ! A hundred hawks assail our broken eyes.

## NIGHT

NOW the strong black hand of night  
Crushes the mountains out of sight,  
Out of sight and out of being,  
There is Nothing for my seeing.

All the songs are sung away,  
Not a whisper left of day.  
Not a note of leaf or bird,  
There is Nothing to be heard.

I am far from toe and heel,  
Only I can grimly feel  
Nothing like a flower growing ;  
There is Nothing for my knowing.

I am far from hand and head,  
Standing out of air and dead,  
Dead, and standing out of air,  
There is Nothing everywhere.

## GREY DAWN

THERE is night  
In the heart of the rose.

The lilies weep.  
There are tears in the wind  
As it blows  
The stars to sleep.

The gods are fallen  
To stone ;  
Their songs to sighs  
For the stars that were gold,  
And are gone  
Out of their skies.

## SHAKESPEARE

WHEN to the market-place of dreams I went  
To bid a penny for the firmament,  
I sudden came upon a star-high man  
Whose mighty composition hid the sun  
With wings as wide as worlds ; and, when he ran  
In space, I thought that wind and he were one.  
Abrupt he checks those truceless feet and stands  
Deliberate with lightnings in his hands,  
Over the Sphinx. Created things attend,  
The speculations of the gods descend  
Upon Earth's human champion stood at bay.  
A moment's pause—slow subtle smile—and he,  
Murmuring “ Lord ! what fools these mortals  
be ! ”  
Heedless and headlong goes his boisterous way.

## SECRET TREATIES. I

WE thought to find a cross like Calvary's,  
And queened proud England with a diadem  
Of thorns. Impetuous armies clamouring  
For war, from the far utterance of the seas  
We sprang, to win a new Jerusalem.  
Now is our shame, for we have seen you fling  
Full-sounding honour from your lips like phlegm  
And bargain up our soul in felonies.

O England, it were better men should read,  
In dusty chronicles, of how a death  
Had found thee in the van of these crusades ;  
To tell their eager sons with bated breath,  
And burning eyes, about a golden deed,  
A vanished race, and high unmortal Shades.

## SECRET TREATIES. II

IS it a god that thunders like a sea  
Upon the gates of Gaza ; should I play  
Samson and bear the brazen strengths away,  
Leaving this wooden citadel to be  
The sport of every storm successively ?  
Beleaguered by the embattled stars, the bay  
Of marching winds, the desperate array  
Of anarchs banded in the heart of me,  
I cannot hear the sacred bugles blow  
Nor see the white battalions of the Cross.  
Each head is Janus. Every proud crusade  
Boasts on its hell-wrought banner holy braid.  
While o'er the dead, uncowering harpies crow  
Patriot fervours and batten on our loss.

## NIGHT AT SCHEVENINGEN

THE North Sea shakes

His ranks in  
    Thunder  
    Through  
    The moon,  
Beats and breaks  
His flanks in  
    Sunder  
    To  
The dune.—

Cold  
Song,  
And pitiless  
On rock and century.  
Bold,  
Strong  
And cityless  
My soul is as the sea.

## THE RAINBOW

DOWN snowy crags when thunder rives  
Embattled clouds, the rainbow drives  
His brilliant foot, upsoaring thence,  
Athwart the storm's magnificence,  
While banded chiefs of tempest glare  
Through dark streamers of wind-strown hair,  
To bind a burning arras on  
The base of Heaven's blue garrison.

## THE ROAD

WHAT do you know of the Road,  
Tramping the dry stone way,  
Down in the bloodless broad  
Plains, by day.

The Road, it is made out of hills  
And the stuff of the night,  
And the boom of waters that fills  
Me with daft delight.

I was naked as wind. I know  
The meaning of bread ;  
A casual crust would go  
Like wine to my head.

By God ! I would rather have died  
In the splendour of my cave  
In the hollow hill-side,  
Then live in your grave.

## ON HEARING THE FOG-HORNS OF A WARSHIP

THE horns of death ! They blow, they blow  
From the bridge of the iron show  
That stands upon the sea,

As a god in exile sings  
The agony of wanderings.

We break no stone, nor rear the Earth  
To sign the compass of our mirth.  
Yonder our steel Temple lies ;—  
In the dark, it cries.

TO A 'GENTLEMAN' FARMER  
WHO HOLDS POETRY "FOOLISH-  
NESS AND NO PROFESSION FOR  
A GENTLEMAN"

GENTEEL serf, since you despise  
Us for the foolish things we prize,  
Honouring an idle song  
Not less than your industrious prong ;  
Pray, clench your gentlemanly hand  
At God, because at His command  
Such idiots exist as He—  
That splendid fool on Calvary.

## THE WALKER AMONG WINDS

TOWERS were my teachers, for I lodged my soul  
In naked magnitudes. I set on sea,  
On cataracts, on red activity  
Discharged in thunder from the aerial coal  
Of God, the sign of mortal mastery.

Man the untutored warrior ! He could bind  
The wingèd waves like strangling ice. He tore  
Obstreperous lightning out of air. He bore  
His banner in the stars, and walked the wind.

But when I stand upon a cloud I know  
A sorry circumstance. The shrivelled crust  
Of mountains shattered down in level dust,  
And man desolved like unremaining snow.

Then fare I far away to find a doom,  
Forever seeking ; but I know not whom.

## PRAYER

THOU, in the centre of indifferent dearth  
Saidst suddenly "I AM," and straight wast God.  
Into the night thou dravest thy word, a rod,  
Cleaving the chaos, with the windy mirth  
Of a delirious demon. And a sod  
Stole from the sea, and where thy foot had trod,  
Followed and fawned, and fell to woe and worth  
And the tremendous circumstance of Earth.

The tortured fiction of thy fancy bleed  
To westward, like a dead sun in a fen,  
Through the wracked fibres of thine empery.

In this foul furnace which all women feed  
With flesh plucked living from the bones of men,  
Show me a star, or curse thyself, and die.

## PSYCHE

WHAT demon hunter winds his wintry horn  
Across the untented plains, beyond the bourne  
Of being ; summons thee to make him mirth  
Starwards and thinking in a clod of earth ;

To count a few poor battered coins and stir  
The sands for bread, and with fond fingers play  
With haunted clouds, and then to drift away  
Forever, O thou liegeless wanderer ?

Surely thou art, O unremaining one,  
As a persistent moth about a light,  
Doomed for a while to range the treacherous zone  
Of some great Truth, and with frail sensuous  
    might  
Assault the burning body of a god,  
And then—farewell to soul in thinking clod.

## AFTER STORM

WHAT iron hand is at thy throat, O Water,  
That thou who wert a king of speech art stood  
Like a lone wraith about a field of slaughter,  
That weeps and prays and knows not what he  
would ?

The clarion eloquence, that loosed in each  
Gigantic gesture on the tremulous air  
Rebellion and fierce vials of despair,  
In timid quavers falters on the beach.

This Titan spirit clamped within his clod  
Of separate Earth to-day rears like a storm  
To toss the winding stars and tread the skies.  
Till calm to-morrow bends his scorching eyes  
For crusts upon the mire ; his resolute form  
To crouch like whining curs at every rod.

## OUT OF SPACE

OUT of space  
And eternity,  
God found this place,  
And time for me.

One cup to drink,  
To draw two breaths ;  
To be one link  
Between two deaths.

Two lightnings mark  
One point—my scope,  
From spark to spark,  
My verge of hope.

One flash to bring me  
Is employed,  
And one to fling me  
Down destroyed.

## THE QUEEN

BE still brave Nature's eloquence,  
Thy gallant chants are charmless now.  
I have drawn experience  
From the same well as thou.

Dear air-strown vaunts, the sea's kind words,  
The deliberate gesture of grave trees  
Cannot bemuse with golden chords  
One wise as these.

Fain would my suffering mother fold  
Translucent veils before her face,  
That, elemental pains controlled,  
She might win me a little grace.

O I have rent the show of green  
Heroic fiction, found the rods  
Of a nameless wraith. The Queen  
Of all the gods.

All the gods of Heaven stand,  
The kings of earth in ancient line,  
On a sleeping infant's hand,  
Even on mine.

Black, beyond the gods of Heaven,  
Above the monarchs of the earth,  
Broods the All-God, who has given  
Empire to Dearth.

Now the wine is tinged with gall,  
The shining fruits of Eden rot,  
I rise to meet the great Queen's call  
To be, and be forgot.

• . . . .  
Come Thou, cradled in whorling water,  
Ice-bound hair and mouth of stone,  
Come Thou, and walk like a sea-king's daughter  
The streets of inland Babylon.

Rived in the rush of her own fierce fountains  
Died my heart to my heart's desire ;  
Nailed to the shoulder of windless mountains,  
Prey of eagle and sport of fire.

Queen of Silence, through starless spaces,  
Where angels tremble, and tall gods kneel,  
Come Thou dreadless, in wintry graces,  
Brow of iron and breasts of steel.

## EUROPE 1914-1918

*“The events of recent years may induce certain of our thinkers to modify their enthusiasm for the importation of Occidental Culture.”*  
—Indian Paper.

CHAOTIC crime, that on the red cloud crest  
Of antique passion ramped like maniac sand,  
Blindly tempested, purposeless, unplanned,  
Ruffianed the cowering culture of the West ;  
That Eastern wit can point its ghastly jest,  
“ Europe, who rose with reason in her hand  
To bid the moveless march of darkness stand,  
Is gone up in the smoke of her own zest.”

An iron rhythm through vast seasons rolled  
Before light dawned ; so day to dark came vowed  
That fall should mate with rise for evermore.  
Based on which timeless Golgotha, behold,  
Cleaving the convex of tumultuous cloud,  
The star-zoned spire of Man’s steep spirit soar.

## THE METAPHYSICIAN

FIRMER hands than these have caught  
God, in the cages of a thought.  
Chaster eyes than these have been  
About the body of the Queen.  
Though I be unworth the skies'  
Favours, yet I may surprise  
Subterranean towers and test  
This dagger in a dragon's breast.

# GODS



## THE DÆMON

PIT-A-PAT, Pit-a-pat,  
All the dark years I never heard that  
Pit-a-pat, Pit-a-pat.

When I stood  
In the black wood  
    Apart,  
Where the swarm  
Of devils storm  
With a worm  
In my heart.  
Pit-a-pat.  
I never heard that.

Pit-a-pat, Pit-a-pat,  
Twenty-three winters,  
All icicle splinters.  
Twenty-three springs,  
All green ghast stings.  
Twenty-three autumns  
Twirled like teetotums,  
Twenty-three summers,  
Mouthing like mummers,

Hustled and hurled,  
World within world.  
Pit-a-pat, Pit-a-pat.  
All the dark years I never heard that.

Pit-a-pat, Pit-a-pat.  
At dead midnight,  
Like the spirit of fright  
When I stood on the brink  
Of Hell—I think  
I should have gone mad  
If not for the glad,  
Soft silence of that  
Pit-a-pat, Pit-a-pat.

The protean churl,  
Like a passionate girl,  
Came to the tip  
Of my heart with a lip  
So slight, that it seemed  
As though I had dreamed  
Then away fled he  
Into mystery.  
Pit-a-pat.

Two dark years I never heard that.

Pit-a-pat, Pit-a-pat.

Yester year I again heard that,  
Louder and longer,  
Prouder and stronger  
He came, with the beat  
Of storms in his feet ;  
Came with the flash  
Of lightning, the crash  
Of planets under  
Shattering thunder.  
I felt the dart  
Of his tongue to my heart,  
The flaming bands  
Of his iron hands  
Tearing the ghost  
Of my will from his post.  
He slaked me my drouth  
In the wine of his mouth,  
Flooding a red  
Foam through my head,  
So that I stood,  
Like a man made of blood  
In a drunken daze,  
Singing his praise.

Pit-a-pat, Pit-a-pat.

Yester-night I again heard that.

Clear and sure.  
I flung the door.  
In trod  
The god.

He held a glass  
Where all time was.  
He took the sands  
In his hands,  
And let them pour  
Upon the floor.  
He bid me tell  
Them as they fell.

I counted once,  
I counted twice ;  
He said, " O dunce,  
Count thou them thrice."

In a trice  
I counted thrice  
As the sand  
Slipped through his hand ;

I counted seven separate times  
The sands in seven separate rhymes.

But how often I might count  
I always made a strange amount,  
For the sands would always run  
Out of numbers into None

Then he caught a million miles,  
And set them on the floor in piles  
And he caught a million others  
And set them down beside their brothers  
He took so many million more  
That all space lay on the floor

He bid me tell the miles, but I,  
Howsoever I might try,  
Found, as I had found before,  
Always Nothing on the floor.

Then he took a million men,  
A million others, and again  
Million upon million hurled,  
Till all the nations of the world  
Were in my little chamber, even  
All the denizens of heaven

Thus he laboured to rehearse  
The pageant of the Universe,

And ever at each total beauty  
He bid me do my ghastly duty.  
But howsoever I might count,  
I always made that strange amount,  
Till I heard the Dæmon cry,  
“ The whole is here, and it is I.”

Then I looked long, long at him,  
Till I grew faint and very dim.  
And I saw to my surprise  
My spirit standing in his eyes.  
And I saw a symbol sit,  
Awful, on the head of it.  
I saw a dread, unspoken truth  
(Dare I say it, in my youth,  
When I have yet some days perchance  
To mingle with earth’s circumstance ?).  
I saw—I saw—O God !—I saw  
(Speak it low with holy awe,  
Speak it difficult and dark,  
Lest the sons of Adam hark),  
That I, two thousand years, had worn  
On Calvary, the Crown of Thorn.

## AFTER READING THE GOSPEL OF SAINT JOHN

IN the right hand  
Of God I stand,  
Though wind and the seas  
Are my enemies.

Storm may cover  
My soul, but the Lover  
Of men shall set me free.

The surge has broken  
My spirit and spoken  
The word of sin through me ;

But shore shall lie  
When the tide is high  
In the centre of the sea ;

And I will make  
To port, and take  
Greatly, Town and Tomb.

Or trim my sail  
To the driving gale,  
And ride with God to deep sea-doom.

## THE SIN

I SAID to modest Sin,  
“ Why lurk shamed within  
Thy secret cell,

“ Like a cloistered woman  
Hallowèd of no man,  
With book and bell ?

“ Throw thy god-grafted arm  
Over me like a charm,  
Stand forth, thou fighter.

“ Stand high and apart  
On the tower of my heart,  
With mace and mitre.”

## THE ROCK

NAILED to the universe triumphantly,  
A Rock. Not Wind with all his bludgeoning,  
Nor Water stretched upon his iron wing,  
Come scathless from that naked panoply.

He stands up in the stomach of the storm,  
Tearing the wind ashriek in twisted lengths ;  
In multitudinous chaos he is form,  
He is a god and stronger than sea-strengths.

Art Thou indeed in Thy vast isolation  
The Rock Supreme when monuments are sand,  
Where, through the tumult of the trembling ages,  
A hunted and forbidden soul may stand,  
When on the driven wind the water rages,

Or art Thou but the crown of all frustration ?

## FAREWELL TO MATHEMATICS

I LABOURED on the anvil of my brain,  
And beat a metal out of pageantry.  
Figure and form I carry in my train,  
To load the scaffolds of Eternity.

Where the Masters are,  
Building star on star,  
Where in masonic ritual  
The great Dead Mathematical  
Wait and wait and wait for me,

To the deliberate presence of the Sun,  
(Bright cynosure of every darkling sign  
Wherein all numbers consummate in One),  
Poised on the bolt of an un-finite line,  
As one whose spirit's state  
Is unafraid but desperate,  
Though far unfathomed fears,  
Through time to timeless years  
I soar, through shade to shine.

They say that on a night there came to Euler,  
As eagle-eyed he stared upon a star,  
Thralled in the spell of mighty space, a toiler  
Like to himself and me, for things that are

Buried from the sight alone  
Of men whose eyes are made of stone,  
And led him out in ecstasy  
Over the dim boundary,  
By the pale gleam of a scimitar.

Then, Euler, mindful of thy lesser need,  
Be thou my pilot in this treacherous hour ;  
That I be less unworth thy greater meed,  
O my strong brother, in the halls of power.

For here and hence I sail  
Alone, beyond the veil ;  
Where square and circle coincide  
And the parallels collide,  
And perfect pyramids flower.

## SCALES

### COPERNICUS.

“ HAVE lavish æons prodigal of toil  
Waged then for *thee* their million generous laws,  
Thou faint cognition, bolted up in soil  
Like whine in sea-shell or a tenuous gauze  
That half is not ? for *thee* rose red Turmoil  
Raving along the Silence, to embroil  
The libidinous Beast of Chaos, till his jaws  
Wrenched by tempestuous Form, reveal the  
Cause ? ”

### PTOLEMY.

“ There is no standard in the strongest star,  
Nor meritorious land, nor constant sea,  
To mark a mile or demonstrate a worth.  
Only in this high human spirit are,  
(The clean articulation of the earth)  
Scales, and a semblance of stability.”

## MAN

HE walks the world with mountains in his breast,  
And holds the hiltless wind in vassalage.  
Transtellar spaces are his fields of quest,  
Eternity his spirit's ambassage.  
The uneared acre of the firmaments  
Under his hungry harrow, yields increase.  
While, from the threshold of dim continents  
They beckon him, who bear the stars in lease.

And yet is he a thane of foreigners,  
On sapphire throned, but in an unkinged house,  
Arrased with honours, broidered in gold sheen—  
A palace in a town of sepulchres.  
Voices he hears, but knows not what they mean,  
His own to him the most mysterious.

## MASTER CELLS

MAN is not stone, nor is Man's monument  
Built in the hungry stomach of the sea.  
Though Time have a tomb, and Space a destiny,  
Though rock with wind be burst and burnt and  
blent,  
Bright rolling organs of the firmament  
Hang dulled and speechless in black Heaven's cone  
When down the night the dark dead sun is thrown ;

Yet, in the virtue of a magnitude  
Or of a cask of steel, in fire secure,  
Or of a microbe, scathless in a storm,  
Minute and massive, garmented and nude,  
From Time concealed, insensible to form,  
Ageless and spaceless the Master Cells endure.

## THE PILOT

HE is liege of wind and the thunder,  
And desperate resolute things.

On the market-skies

His spirit buys

A drink of death on desolate wings.

His hands

Hold Fate.

He stands

Like Hate

Between the winds and under

The flashing brim

Of the waters, slim

U boats wilt at the sign of him.

He rides the wild cloud-horses  
On tracks of polar gold.

His heart is hound

Of the hunting-ground

Where the ghostly stags are foaled.

Through hives

Of stars,

He drives

His cars

Along moon-metalled courses.  
His feet are shod  
With lightning-rod,  
To walk the living hand of God.

## A BLADE OF GRASS

HORSES I saw, and on the horses gods,  
Cumbering desolation as they massed  
In battle on the plains around this vast  
Toil of the Titan Masons, in whose hods  
Swirled the red energy of lightning-rods  
As they this cloud-compelling trophy cast ;  
Till conquered chaos withered in the blast  
Of Heaven's loud bugles blown at diremost odds.

Here is the heart of hazard where the fate  
Of cosmic things hangs dubious to Time's end.  
Nor shall the traces of the sword endure,  
Nor all man's wit the matter arbitrate.  
The awful powers are armed and naught's secure !  
Within this blade the hostile stars contend.

## ANY DAISY

I ADDRESS  
Her Mightiness  
In fear.

Nor have forgot  
That she is not  
More near,

Nor more far  
Than any star  
To me ;

Then am I  
Afraid, and cry  
For Thee.

Lord ! “ Be kind,  
For I am blind  
With shame.

“ Lord, is this  
A flower or is  
She flame ? ”

## NIGHT-FLYING

ALOFT on footless levels of the night  
A pilot thunders through the desolate stars,  
Sees in the misty deep a fainting light  
Of far-off cities cast in coal-dark bars  
Of shore and soundless sea ; and he is lone,  
Snatched from the universe like one forbid,  
Or like a ghost caught from the clay and thrown  
Out on the void, nor God cared what he did.

Till from these unlinked whisperers that pain  
The buried earth he swings his boat away,  
Even as a lonely thinker who hath run  
The gamut of great lore, and found the Inane,  
Then stumbles at midnight upon a sun  
And all the honour of a mighty day.

TO D. C. B.

“OTHERS had parents, you had only me  
An ugly, cross, auld buddie,” so you sighed  
When many years ago my mother died  
In far-off foreign London. And then we  
Fled to the hills like deer in jeopardy.  
Mine infant hands you laid on power, and plied  
My heart with flame, and bade me fearless ride  
Away from you to meet the advancing sea.

Robed in red dreams with Ninus have I gone  
To win Semiramis at Babylon,  
Travelled in Faerie, bright with elfin dames  
Who had instructed Phidias in despair.  
Evil and good with all they hold most rare  
Are to your central splendour but dim frames.

## THE COCKNEY'S DREAM

HE heard a voice storm up the falls of song.  
A vision flamed across his soul's dark blind.

He saw huge serpents hurrying along,  
And a great lion raving in the wind.

On shattered, red, tremendous feet the grim  
Ghast ghost of London gaped—and gripped at  
him.

## WITH NIGHT AMONG THE MOUNTAINS

TIME, in the van of fallen centuries,  
In fallow spaces swings his unfleshed scythe.  
Lo ! Deathliest night burns through eternities,  
Where ragged waters rave and shrewd winds  
writhe  
Over the blunted hungry edge ; but those  
Unmortal trophies where strong dreamers trod—  
Vast shadows loitering on moon-taken snows—  
Out-tower tall Time and scale abreast of God.

## OVER THE DEAD

WHO in the splendour of a simple thought,  
Whether for England or her enemies,  
Went in the night, and in the morning died ;  
Each bleeding piece of human earth that lies  
Stark to the carrion wind, and groaning cries  
For burial—each Jesu crucified—  
Hath surely won the thing He dearly bought ;  
For wrong is right when wrong is greatly wrought.

Yet is the Nazarene no thane of Thor,  
To play on partial fields the puppet king,  
Bearing the battle down with bloody hand.  
Serene he stands, above the gods of war,  
A naked man where shells go thundering—  
The great unchallenged Lord of No-Man's Land.

## ODE TO THE POETS

THIS is the world you made  
Out of the songs you sang ;  
And the songs unsung,  
Like swords, are flung  
Down, where dead men hang.

Be gluttons of this ripe red star,  
Of her rich mouth be your mouths amorous.  
Her breath be on your blood  
As sunrise on a bud.

Be pirates, and make war  
On boats that bear the golden bar ;  
Be misers, mild and mean,  
In the reaper's prints, to glean  
Glittering straw, servile and sedulous ;

But be kinglike—cold and taut  
Beneath a facile skin ;  
Be as Gods in your deep thought,  
A bended bow within.

Let pagans plant their spirit in the forms  
And figure of the earth ;—poor temporal faith  
That dares not look into the eye of death,  
Because its God is vulnerable to worms  
And ill in face of cannon-shot.

*They* may not sing upon the battlefield  
Whose All is sensitive to rust and rot ;  
Their rosy strings of eld,  
Forgetful of the songs they held,  
But horrid lies and tuneless discords yield.

Who hath had commerce in grave peaceful hours,  
With sacred, awful, elemental powers ;  
Who, undismayed, while yet the kind dawn shone,  
Looked to the scroll of flesh and read thereon  
How in each man there walks his skeleton ;

He, in the crashing circumstance of doom,  
Under the splitten skies,  
When the iron devil flies  
Through white vestures flaming from the loom  
Of Nature weaving, even in the tomb,  
Beauty for the hour she dies.

He, in his steadfast thought shall rise  
Above the treason of his eyes,

To follow sight beyond his seeing,  
To borrow breath above his being ;  
Till shattered flesh and twisted bone  
Are mingled into air and gone ;  
Till he stand up in the starkness  
Of his spirit, and the darkness  
Of Death and Light are one.

## ROADS

THOUGH to Master Priests be given,  
By grace, in single holy levin,  
Carnal privilege of Heaven ;

Yet all Earth is flood with foam  
Of loveliness, to lead us home.  
There are many roads, but Rome

Is everywhere. Old Skullcap, who  
Half-crazed his wits a-nosing through  
Philosophies, at eighty-two

Stumbled in, with stool and staff,  
Plotting Thy Eternal Graph  
On his poor brittle cenotaph.

Young Science, linked with worship, came,  
Gowned at last in comely shame,  
To find in every flower a flame.

Who a painted cheek had kissed,  
Were he rake or atheist,  
Had kissed Thee, though he never wist.

But, to be a poet's prize,  
Thou hast thrown through tiers of skies  
From Earth, Thy topless masonries,

That we might step from stair to stair,  
Of beauty piled on beauty, where  
The spirals end in Thy sheet lair.

## LIFE AND DEATH

LO ! Life and Death, the Lover and the Maid,  
Of birth is She  
Most rare, and He  
Wistfully afraid.

I and Thou—the Science and the Truth,  
As Life meets Death  
Breath on Breath,  
Age into ageless youth.

## THE MOON

GHAST mass of ice, thou tomb  
Once a live womb  
Teeming to birth ;  
Even as Earth.

Thou, even as  
Earth, from the primal mass  
Swirled into space,  
Folded thy shrunken face,  
Buckled thy molten base,  
Till seas boil and roar  
Where crags smoke and soar  
Out of thy blazing core.

Thence to thy Cambrian night,  
Silurian trilobite,  
Darting belemnite,  
Gigantic dinosaur,  
Swooping thy desolate shore  
Where the sheer course is  
Of the tapir-toed horses,  
Upward to shape  
Man out of ape,  
Out of a beast  
Poet and priest.

Now thou art led  
On a viewless thread  
Round Earth new-born, with thy cargo of dead,  
That a bird should sing  
In the heart of spring,  
Of winter waiting to shatter her wing.  
Thou floating tomb,  
Thou withered womb,  
Thou pale Cassandra of Troyland doom,  
I who rest  
At the burning breast  
Of beauty fling thee a golden jest.  
Go slay with slight,  
Stolen might,  
Lark and linnet, but spare the kite  
Or ever he harry thee out of night.

DECEMBER 1918

THROUGH this pontiff hill I hear  
Christ comforting, with ghostly cheer  
The last hour of the dying year.

Poor-broken-hearted year ! who fain  
From her tomb would turn again  
For pardon, that she brought us pain.

• . . . .  
Night has strown my heart until  
I see the silence of this hill  
Is God's sad spirit standing still.

Standing still, because He fain  
Would let the poor year turn again  
For pardon, that she brought us pain.

## RETURN

THE hearts of the mountains were void,  
The sea spake foreign tongues,  
From the speed of the wind I gat me no breath,  
And the temples of Time were as sepulchres.  
I walked about the world in the midnight,  
I stood under water and over stars,  
I cast Life from me,  
I handled Death,  
I strode naked into lightning,  
I had so great a thirst for God.

. . . . .

The heart of the mountain overfloweth,  
The sea speaketh clear words,  
The Ark is brought to the Tabernacle.  
Lightnings that withered in the sky  
Are become great beacons roaring in a wind.  
I see Death, lying in the arms of Life,  
And, in the womb of Death, I see Joy.  
I had said "The Spirit of Earth is white,"  
But lo ! He is red with joy,  
He devoureth the meat of many nations,  
He absorbeth a vintage of scarlet.

Though my head be with the stars  
All the flowers of Earth are singing in mine ears.

Though my foot be planted on the sea-bed  
Yet is it shod with the thunder.

Sorrow for Earth Transient is passed away,  
Pain of martyr'd splendour is no more.  
They have left a fair child in my lap,  
A lusty infant shouting to the dawn.

The Ogre of midnight hath perished,  
He shivered in the glare of the mountain,  
He screamed upon the swords of the sea,  
His bowels rushed out upon the lances of the wind.

I shall not descend from the hill,  
Never go down to the valley.  
For I see on a snow-crowned peak  
The Glory of the Lord,  
Erect as Orion  
Belted to his blade.  
But the roots of the mountains mingle with mist  
And raving skeletons run thereon.

I shall not go hence.  
For here is my Priest,  
Who hath broken me in the waters of Disdain.  
Here is my Jester,

Who hath mended me on the wheels of Mirth.  
Here is my champion,  
Who hath confounded mine ancient Enemy.  
Ardgay—the slayer of giants.

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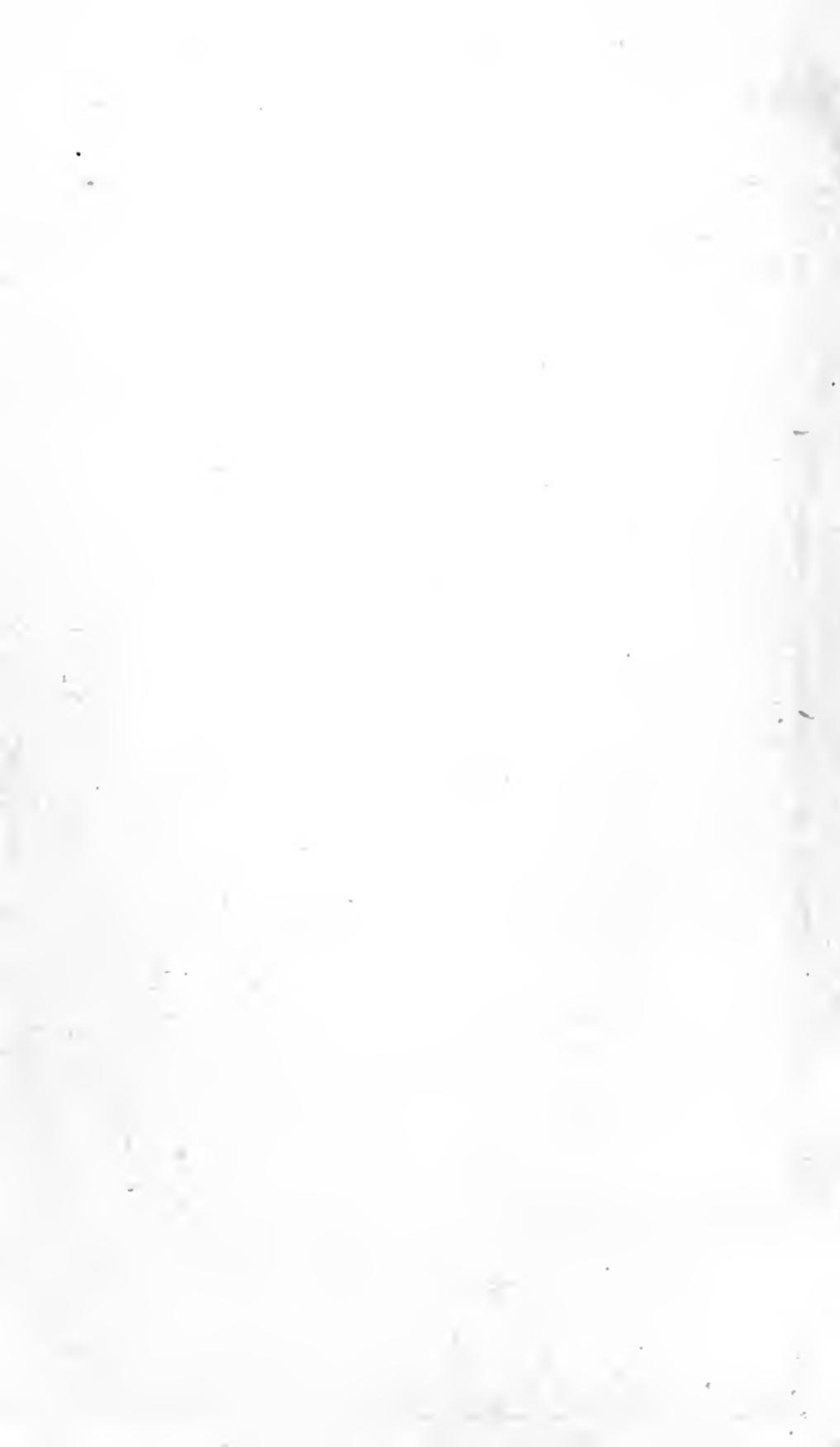
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